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Gaming machine with special multiple outcome feature

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GAMING MACHINE WITH SPECIAL MULTIPLE OUTCOME FEATURE

5 This invention relates to gaming machines of the type commonly referred to in Australia as "poker machines" in which a plurality of symbols are displayed to a player during a game on the machine and the player is able to win prizes when particular combinations of symbols are displayed.

10 Players who regularly play gaming machines can become bored with certain types of games and it is desirable for gaming machine manufacturers to provide interesting game features which can provide amusement to players thereby attracting players to the machine or encouraging a player to continue playing games on the machine.

15 Some gaming machines include additional game features which are triggered by particular winning combinations of features appearing on the display of the gaming machine. One such feature is a "Double" feature in which, when certain winning combinations are displayed, the player can risk his winnings, or part of them, in a "double or nothing" gamble, for example on whether a card is red or black.

20 According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control the display of symbols on the display means in a game wherein different combinations of symbols are displayed to a player and, if a winning combination of symbols is displayed, the machine pays a prize, wherein when a predetermined triggering event occurs, a special multiple outcome feature commences in which the player selects a plurality of possible outcomes in the multiple outcome feature and the prize
25 awarded to the player is determined by the result of the multiple outcome feature and the plurality of outcomes selected by the player.

30 The present invention is particularly applicable to video gaming machines in which the display means comprises a video simulation of a plurality of spinning reels, each carrying a plurality of symbols, commonly known in Australia as "poker machines" and, in some jurisdictions as "fruit machines". It will, however, be appreciated that the invention could be applied to a traditional gaming machine

having mechanical spinning reels. The invention is equally applicable to video card gaming machines, such as a video draw poker machine in which a poker hand is displayed on a display screen, the cards of the poker hand being selected from a deck of cards.

5 Preferably, the special multiple outcome feature is triggered by the display of a special symbol or a combination of special symbols.

In a preferred embodiment, the multiple outcome feature is triggered by the display of three or more symbols in the normal game displayed to the player and the player selects two or more of those symbols which represent possible outcomes, 10 such as horses, racing cars in a race, etc., in the multiple outcome feature, e.g. by pressing parts of a touch sensitive screen or buttons corresponding to those symbols.

In a particularly preferred embodiment, the multiple outcome feature is a race feature in which the player can select three competitors in a race having at least 15 four competitors, and a greater prize is awarded to the player if the player selects the first three competitors finishing in the race, than if the player selects only one or two of the first three competitors finishing in the race.

A preferred embodiment of the invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

20 Figure 1 shows a video gaming machine with a simulated reel display;

Figure 2 shows the simulated reel display of the gaming machine with a combination of symbols to trigger a special race feature;

Figures 3 to 5 show successive displays of the machine enabling the player to select a plurality of competitor symbols for the special race feature;

25 Figures 6 to 8 show displays of the machine during the special race feature;

Figure 9 shows the simulated reel display of the machine after conclusion of the special race feature.

Referring to Figure 1 there is shown an electronic video gaming machine or "slot machine" 10 which has a touch screen video display 11 that is controlled by 30 control means, such as a programmable control unit (PCU), (not shown) within the

machine to simulate five spinning wheels 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 each having a plurality of symbols thereon.

The gaming machine 10 includes a coin intake slot 20, and a coin payout tray 22 for dispensing winnings to the player. The machine may also include other means for providing credits to a player to play the machine, such as a note acceptor for accepting currency notes and/or a card reader for accepting a smart card, credit card or the like. The machine 10 also includes a handle 18 which a player pulls to initiate a game. Alternatively or additionally, a game may be initiated by the player pressing a start button 24 or a panel on the touch screen video display 11.

The simulated spinning reels 12 - 16 are substantially identical, except that they vary in the combinations of symbols displayed. The symbols may be numbers, letters and/or icons, such as fruits or other symbols appropriate to the theme of the particular game.

In a particularly preferred embodiment, the symbols relate to horse racing, such as horseshoes, saddles, binoculars, etc, although it will be appreciated that other symbols may be used for games with a different theme.

Referring to Figure 2, the video display 11 shown has four scattered horse symbols 31, 32, 33, 34 on the simulated reels 12 - 16 after the simulated spinning of the reels has stopped. This event triggers a multiple outcome feature in the form of a special race feature in which the player is instructed to select three of the four horses 31 - 34 which the player believes will finish first, second and third in a simulated race between the four horses to be subsequently displayed on the video display 11.

Preferably, the player selects the three horses by pressing the actual horse symbols 31 - 34 on the touch screen video display 11 in the required order, first, second and third. The selected horses are portrayed on a display area 36 above the simulated reel display on the touch screen 11 as shown in Figures 3 to 5. Instructions to assist the player in selecting the horses may be displayed on a permanent glass display 38 of the gaming machine and/or on the touch screen video display 11. In a modified embodiment, not shown, the horses may be selected by

pressing separate buttons on the gaming machine corresponding to each of the simulated reels on which the horse symbols appear.

When the player has selected three of the horses, the video display 11 changes to display a simulated race as shown in Figures 6 and 7. Figure 6 shows the horses in the starting barrier 40, and Figure 7 shows the race in progress with one of the horses 32 just reaching the winning post 42. During the simulated race feature, the horses selected by the player are displayed in the display area 36 adjacent the words "Your Ticket". At the conclusion of the race a prize is awarded to the player which is determined by the result of the race and the horses selected by the player. For example, the prize awarded may be determined in accordance with the table below.

TRIFECTA	PRIZE	WIN, PLACE & SHOW	PRIZE
Exact	50	First	20
Box	40	Second	15
		Third	10

If there is no matches between the horses selected by the player and the horses finishing first, second and third in the simulated race, the player may be paid a consolation prize, for example 5 credits. Coinciding win, place (second) and show (third) prizes are paid unless the result is a trifecta. Then, only the trifecta prize is paid. The exact trifecta prize is paid if the player selects the first three horses in the correct order. The box trifecta prize is paid if the player selects the first three horses, but in an incorrect order. The amount of the prize may be multiplied by the total number of credits staked by the player or the preceding spinning reel game or by credits staked by the player during the special race feature.

At the conclusion of the race, the amount of credits won by the player is displayed on the display screen 11 as shown in Figure 8 and then the video display 11 returns to displaying the simulated reels 12 - 16, for the next normal game to be played on the gaming machine as shown in Figure 9.

The present invention thus provides a special game feature for gaming machines which enhances player appeal by allowing the player to select a plurality of competitors in a race feature, thereby making the gaming machine more attractive to the player.

5 It will be appreciated that various modifications may be made to the preferred embodiment described above without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention. For instance, the number of simulated reels, the number of competitors in the race and the number of competitors selected by the player may be varied, eg. the player could be instructed to select two competitors, with prizes
10 being awarded for correct selection of a forecast or quinella (first and second), and/or for first and second places, or there may be more than four competitors in the race.

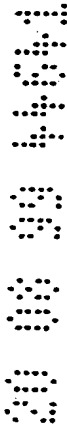
Further, the event that triggers the special race feature may be varied, possibly requiring certain symbols to appear on a single win line, or the race feature
15 could even be a mystery feature, triggered at random.

It is conceived that a multiple outcome feature in accordance with the invention could be incorporated in a traditional mechanical spinning reel type gaming machine. For instance, there may be only brown horses on the first reel, black horses on the second reel, grey horses on the third reel and white horses on
20 the fourth reel of a five reel machine which has brown, black, grey and white horses on the fifth reel. The multiple outcome feature could be triggered by one of each of the horses on the first four reels, and in the multiple outcome feature the player is instructed to select three horses the player believes the fifth reel will spin to in order. The first to fourth reels are held and the fifth reel is spun three times. A
25 prize is paid depending upon the order of the player's selection and the outcome of the random order in which the horses have been spun up on the fifth reel.

In another embodiment the player may be instructed to select a number of faces of a die in the order the player believes they will occur when a die is thrown a plurality of times or a plurality of dice are thrown.

30 The prize paid will depend on the selection and the outcomes of the die throws.

It is also envisaged that the special multiple outcome feature could be provided in gaming machines of types other than the spinning-reel type machines. For instance, the special race feature could be provided in a draw-poker type gaming machine with the feature triggered by a certain combination of cards, eg.
5 four of a kind, with a player selecting three of the cards which correspond to possible outcomes in a subsequent multiple outcome feature.



THE CLAIMS DEFINING THE INVENTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. A gaming machine having display means, and game control means arranged to control the display of symbols on the display means in a game in which different combinations of symbols are displayed to a player and, if a particular winning combination of symbols is displayed the machine pays a prize, wherein when a predetermined triggering event occurs, a special multiple outcome feature commences in which the player selects a plurality of possible outcomes in the multiple outcome feature and the prize awarded to the player is determined by the result of the multiple outcome feature and the plurality of outcomes selected by the player.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein the special multiple outcome feature is triggered by the display of three or more particular symbols in the game, the symbols corresponding to possible outcomes in the multiple outcome feature, and the player is instructed to select two or more of the symbols corresponding to the possible outcomes in the multiple outcome feature.
3. A gaming machine according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the multiple outcome feature is a race feature in which the player can select three competitors in a race having at least four competitors and a greater prize is awarded to the player if the first three competitors finishing in the race are selected than if only one or two of the first three competitors finishing in the race are selected.

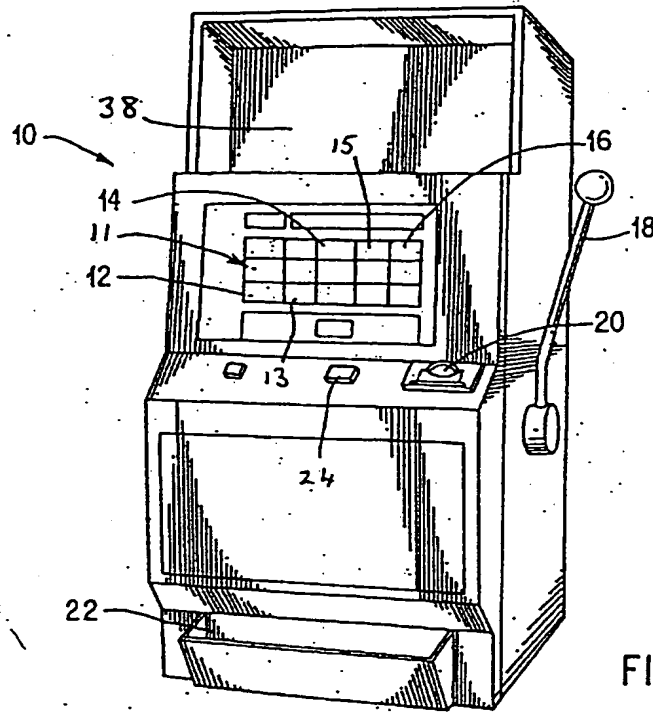


FIG. 1

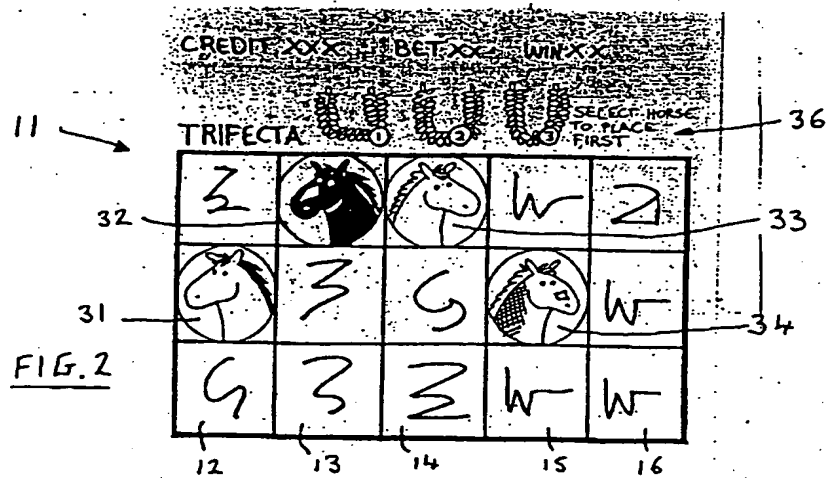


FIG. 2

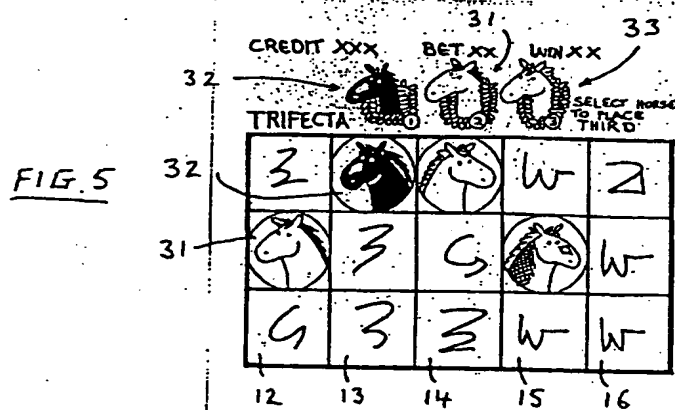
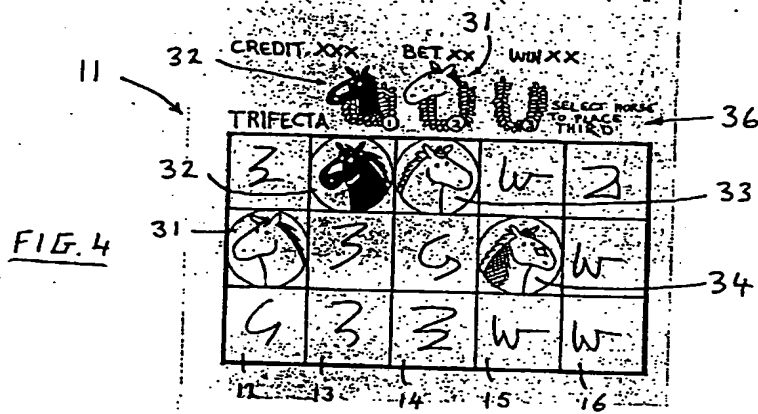
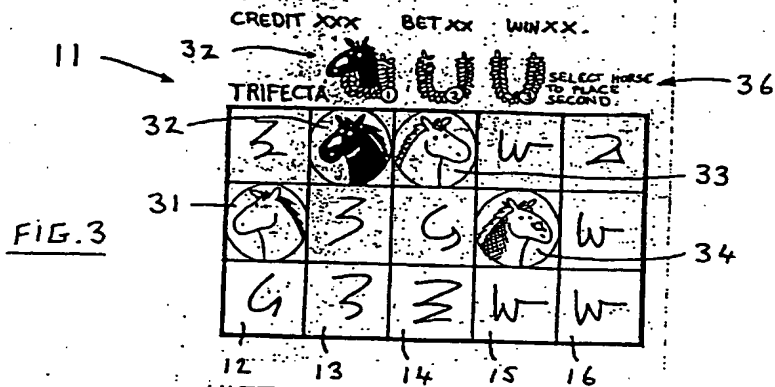


FIG. 6

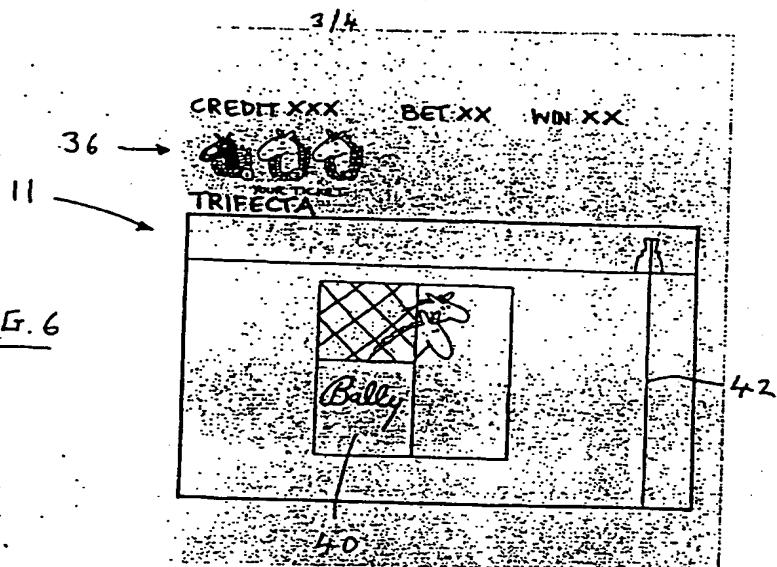


FIG. 7

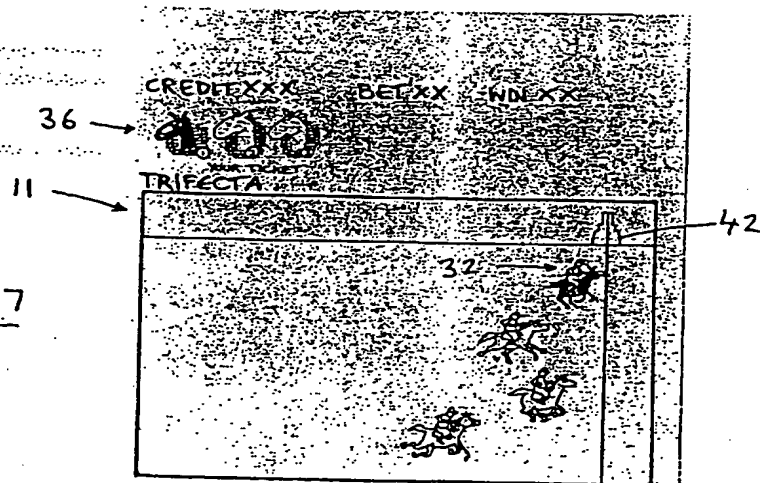


FIG. 8

11 →

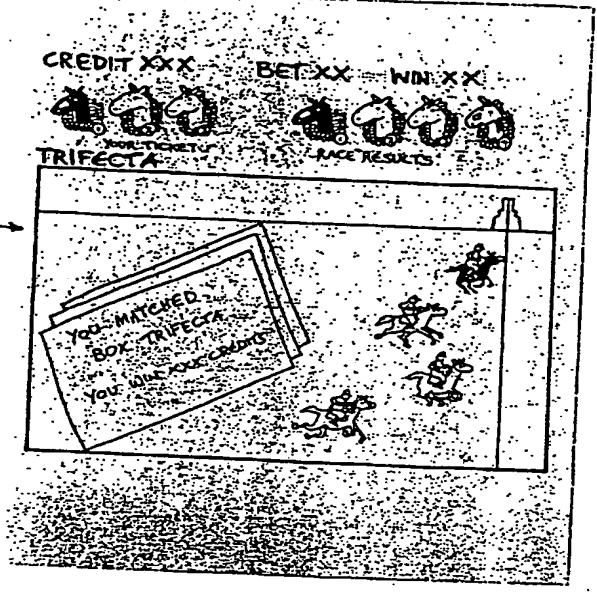


FIG. 9

11 →

